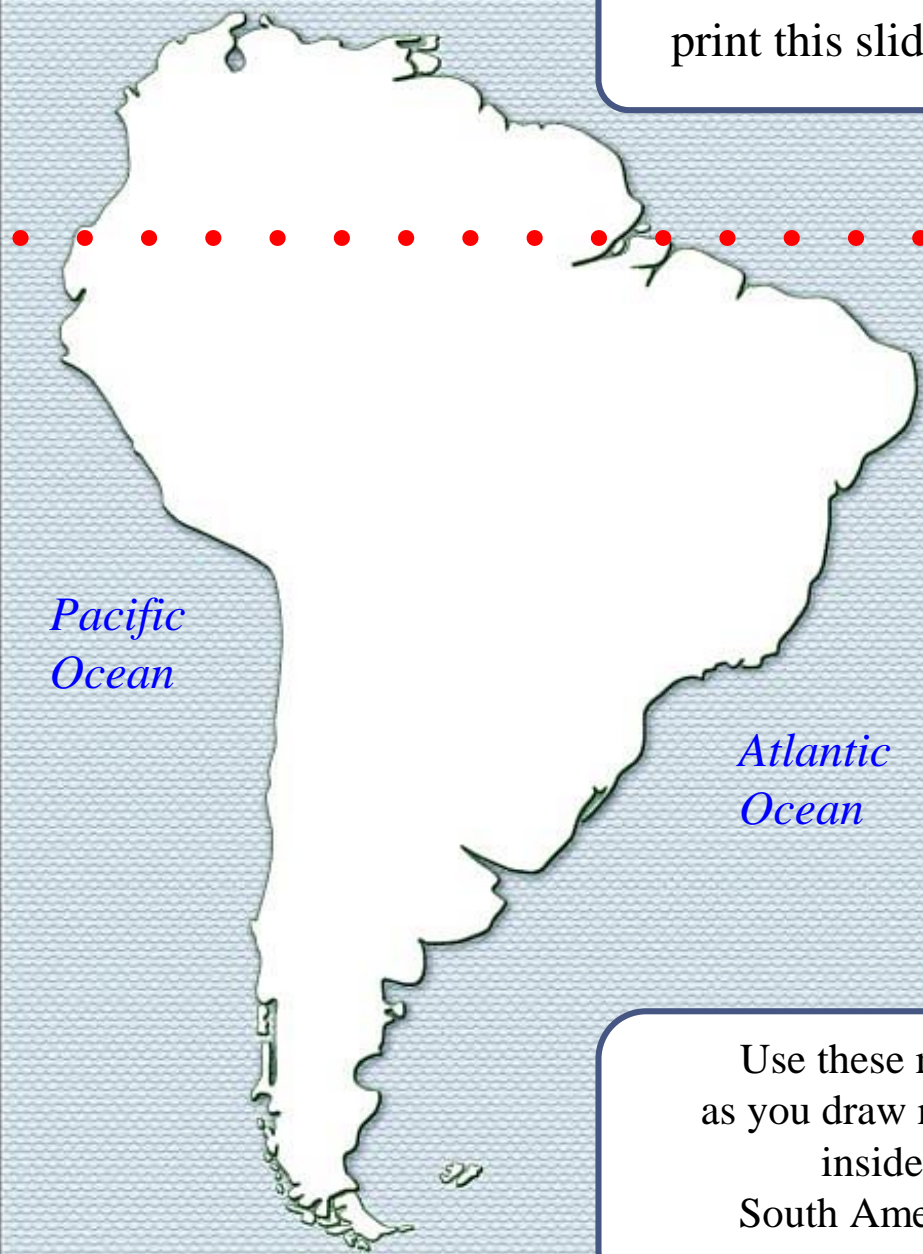


# **Three Highland Regions and Three River Systems**

**Constructing a mental map  
of  
South America**

Teachers may  
print this slide.



*Pacific  
Ocean*

*Atlantic  
Ocean*



*Pacific  
Ocean*

*Atlantic  
Ocean*

Use these maps  
as you draw regions  
inside  
South America.

Definition: a **region** is a group of places that are like each other and close to each other

If you draw a line around places that are alike and close to each other, the result is a **region**.

### **Why do we want to see regions?**

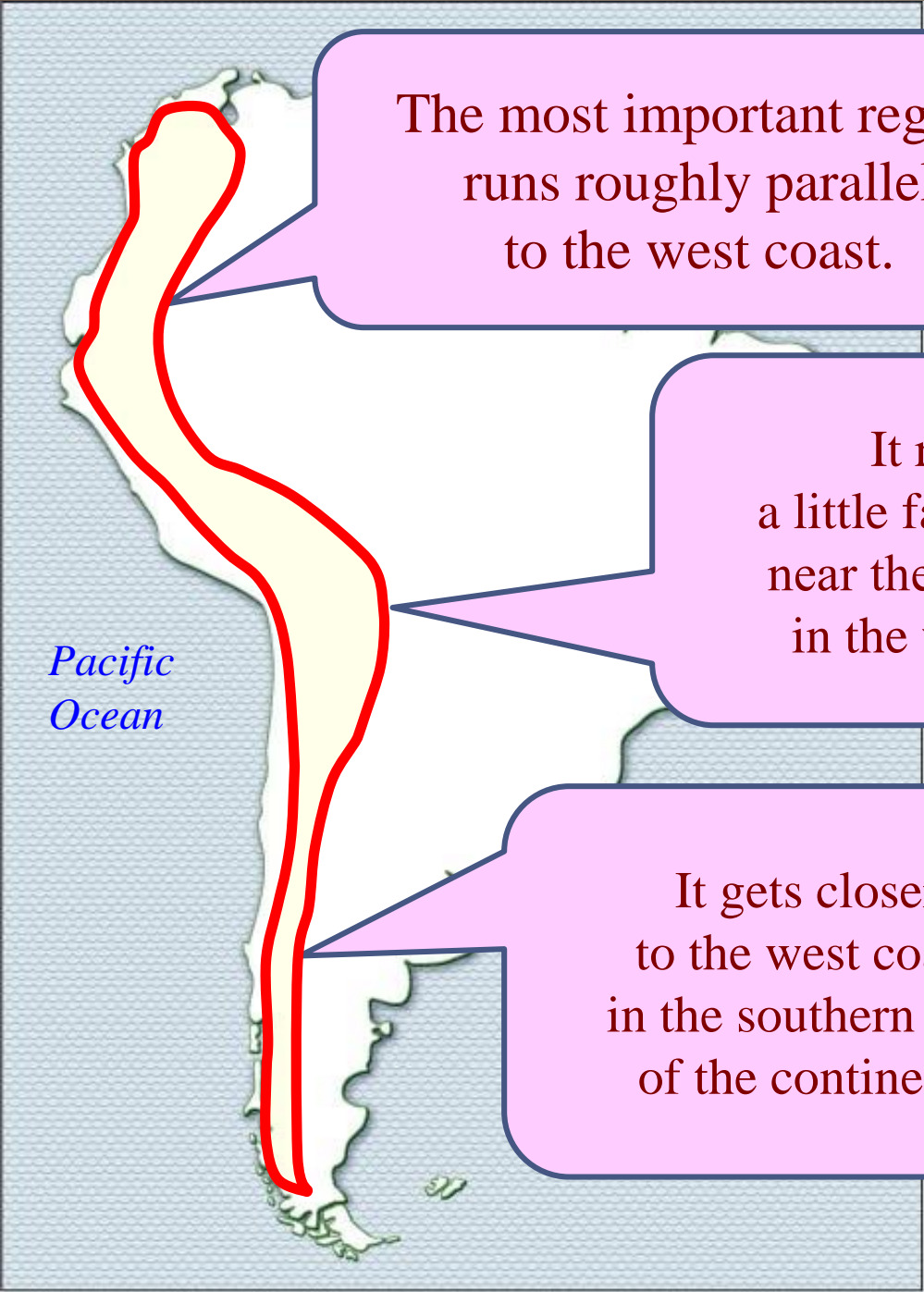
*Because it is usually easier to remember the general shape of a region, rather than the locations of many individual places.*

Let's look at how to make a simple map that shows regions.



The continent of South America looks a little bit like an ice-cream cone.

First, we will draw lines around three **highland regions** inside South America.

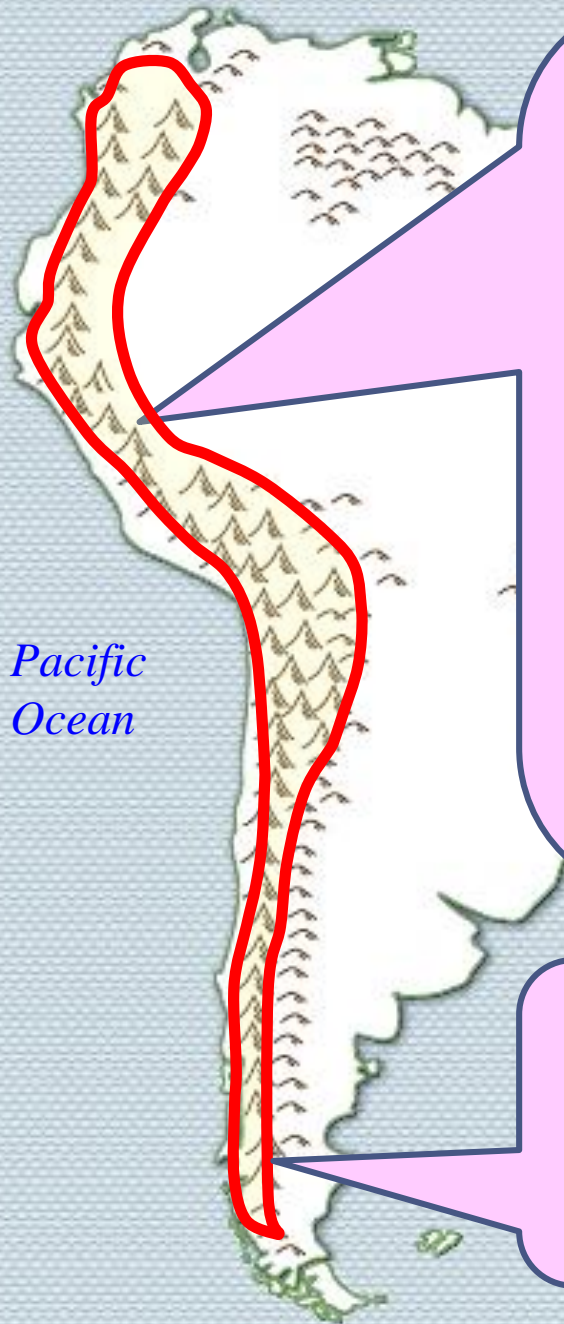


The most important region runs roughly parallel to the west coast.

It reaches a little farther inland near the “big bend” in the west coast.

It gets closer to the west coast in the southern part of the continent.

*Pacific Ocean*



*Pacific  
Ocean*

## **Region 1:**

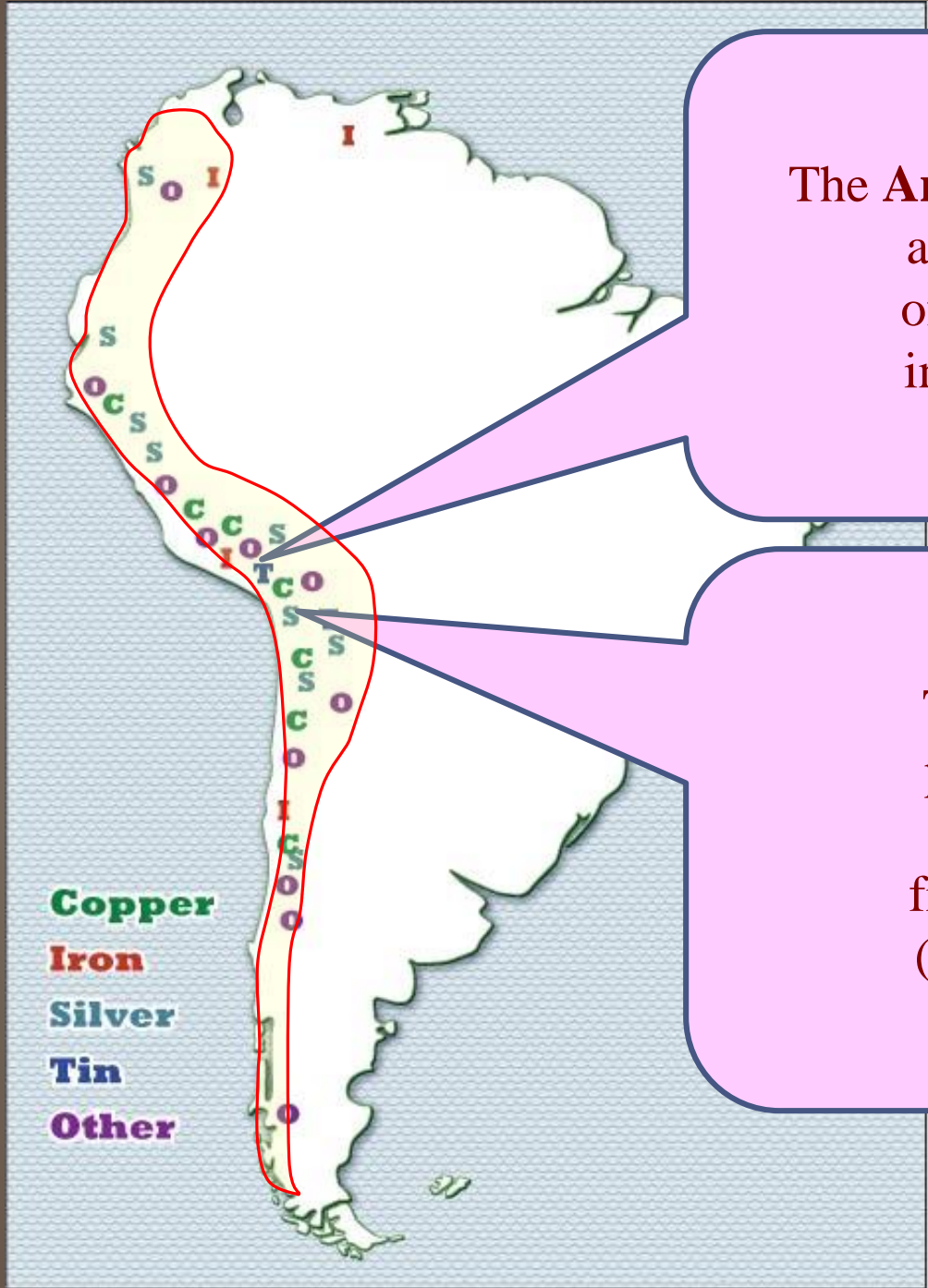
**Draw our first region  
on the west side  
of South America.**

**The Andes Mountains**  
is a region of  
young rocks,  
earthquakes, volcanoes,  
and high, rugged mountains,

The Andes mountains  
have been up-lifted  
by collisions of  
the earth's crustal plates.



The Inca Empire  
ruled over most of  
the western  
**Andes Mountain**  
region  
in the early 1500s.



The **Andes Mountain** region also has nearly all of the metal mines in South America.

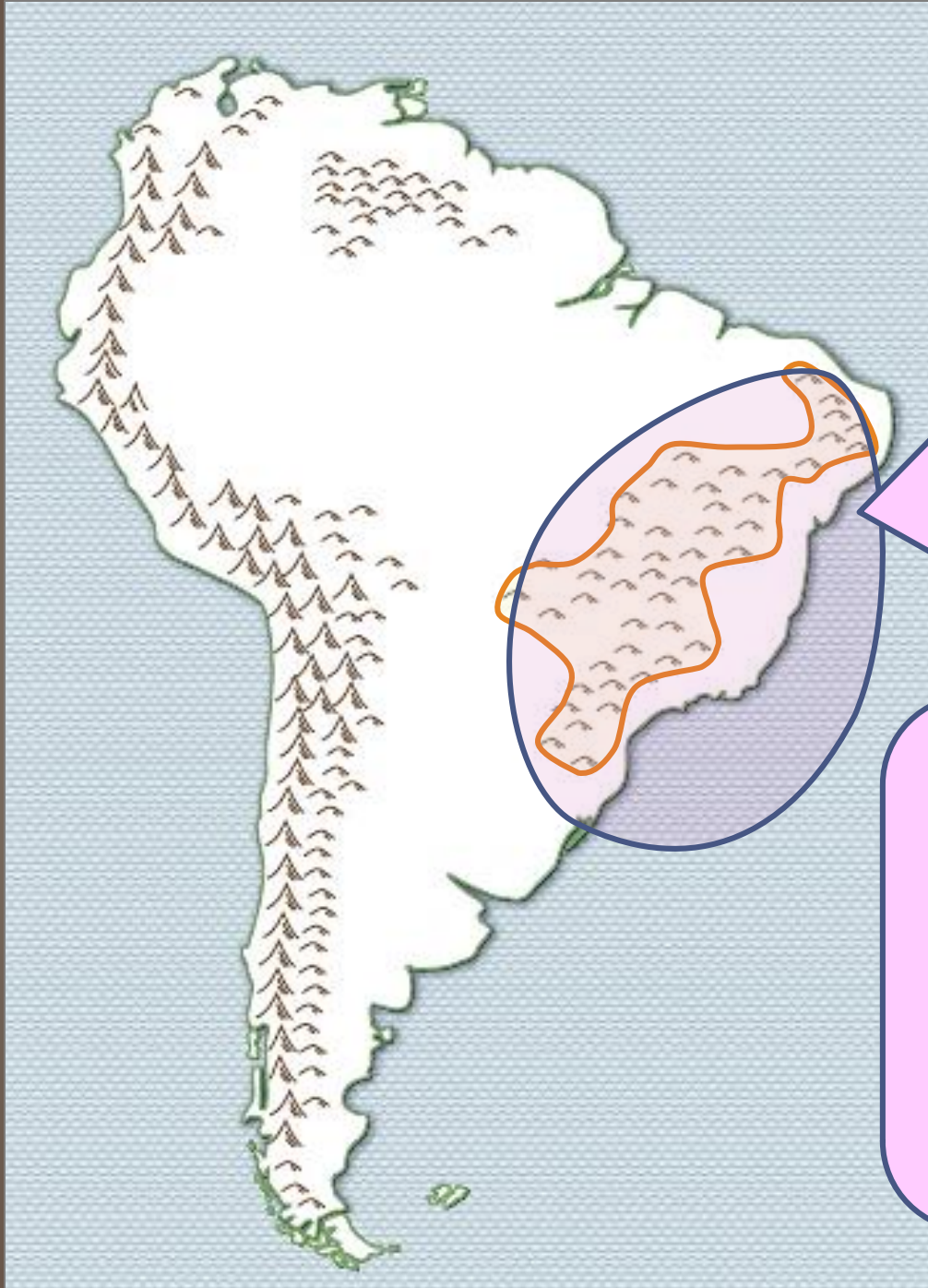
Throughout history, people have tried to control wealth from the metal mines (e.g., silver, copper).





The large eastern side|  
of South America has  
lower elevations.

It has two  
separate regions  
of lower hills  
made of  
really old rocks.



## Region 2.

The larger area  
(the **Brazil Highlands**)  
looks like half  
of a big, egg-shaped  
mass of ancient rock . . .

because, in fact, it is!

The other half is in Africa.  
When the “supercontinent”  
called Pangaea split apart,  
the separate pieces  
moved to opposite sides  
of the Atlantic Ocean.



**Region 2.  
Brazil Highlands:**

**Draw a  
more simple version  
of this region.**



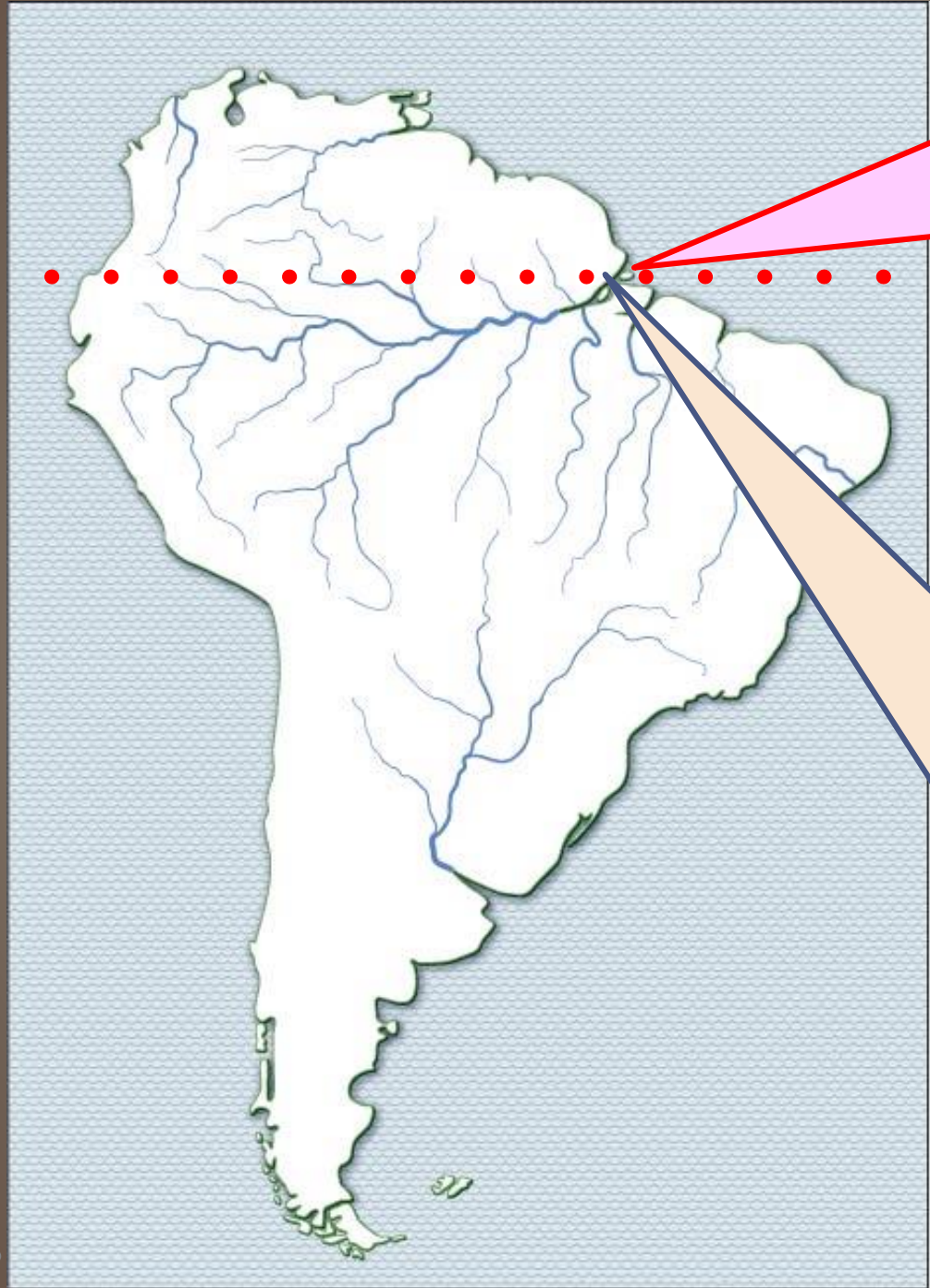
The **Brazil Highlands** region runs roughly parallel to the coast.

To the north, there is a small coastal plain between the hills and the Atlantic coast.

The hills are very close to the coast in the area around Rio de Janeiro.



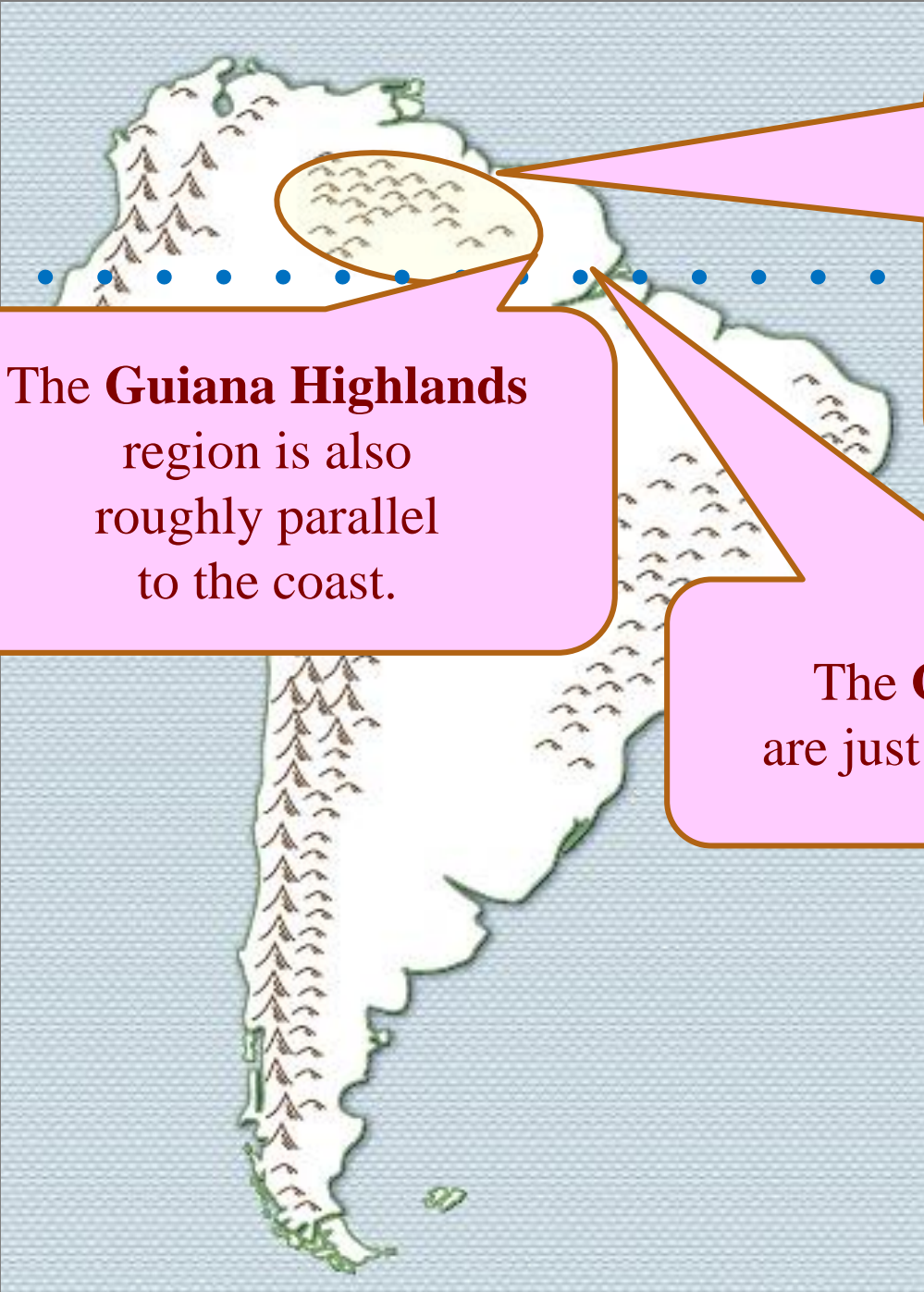
The other  
highland area  
is easier to draw  
if you know  
the location  
of the Equator.



The Equator crosses into South America at the deep “notch” where the Amazon River flows into the Atlantic.

That’s just luck –  
but it makes it easy to remember the location of the Equator on maps.

AND it makes it easier to remember the location of the largest river on the planet.

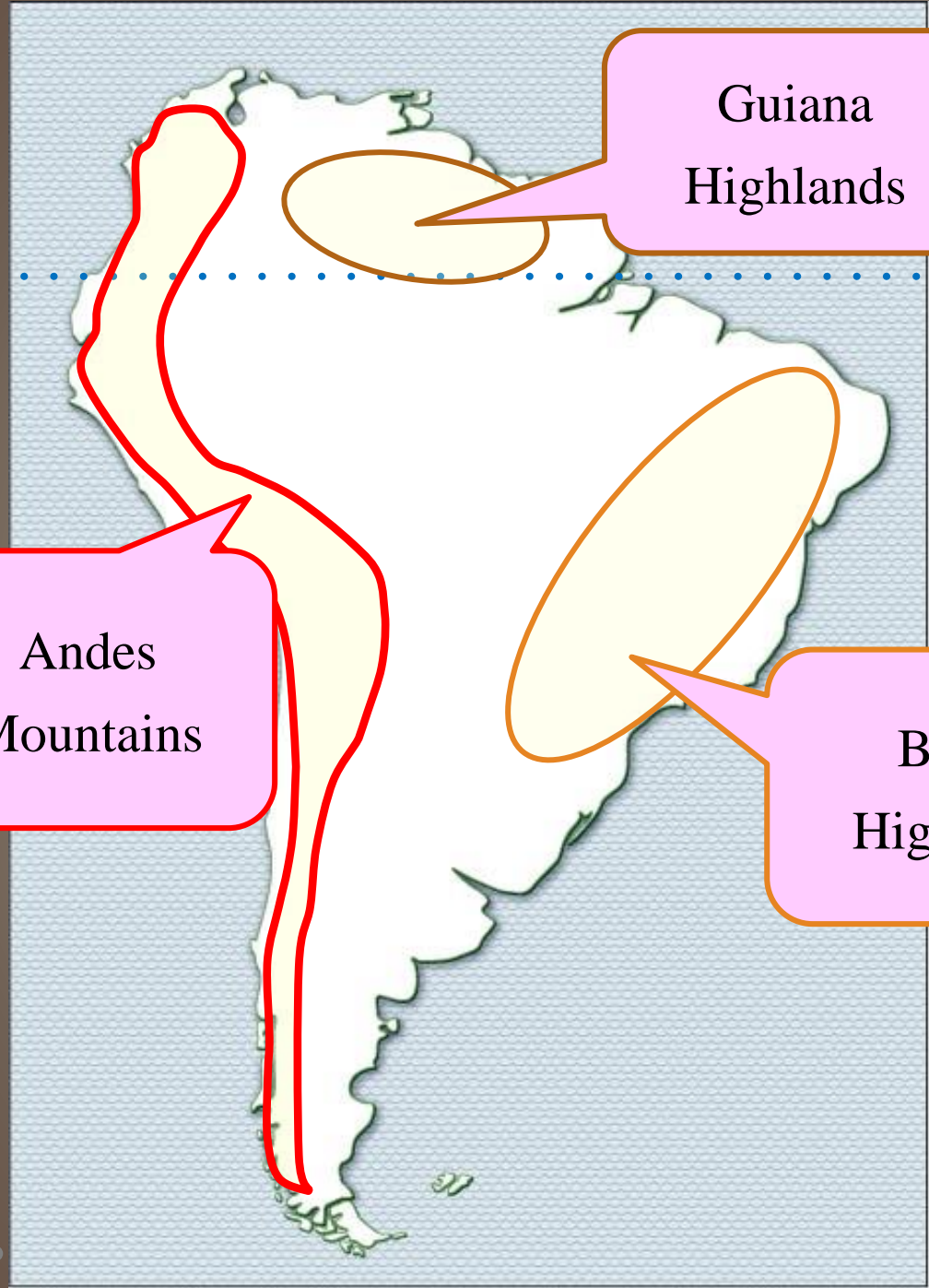


The **Guiana Highlands** region is also roughly parallel to the coast.

**Region 3.**  
**Guiana Highlands:**

**Draw a more simple version.**

The **Guiana Highlands** are just north of the Equator.



Guiana  
Highlands

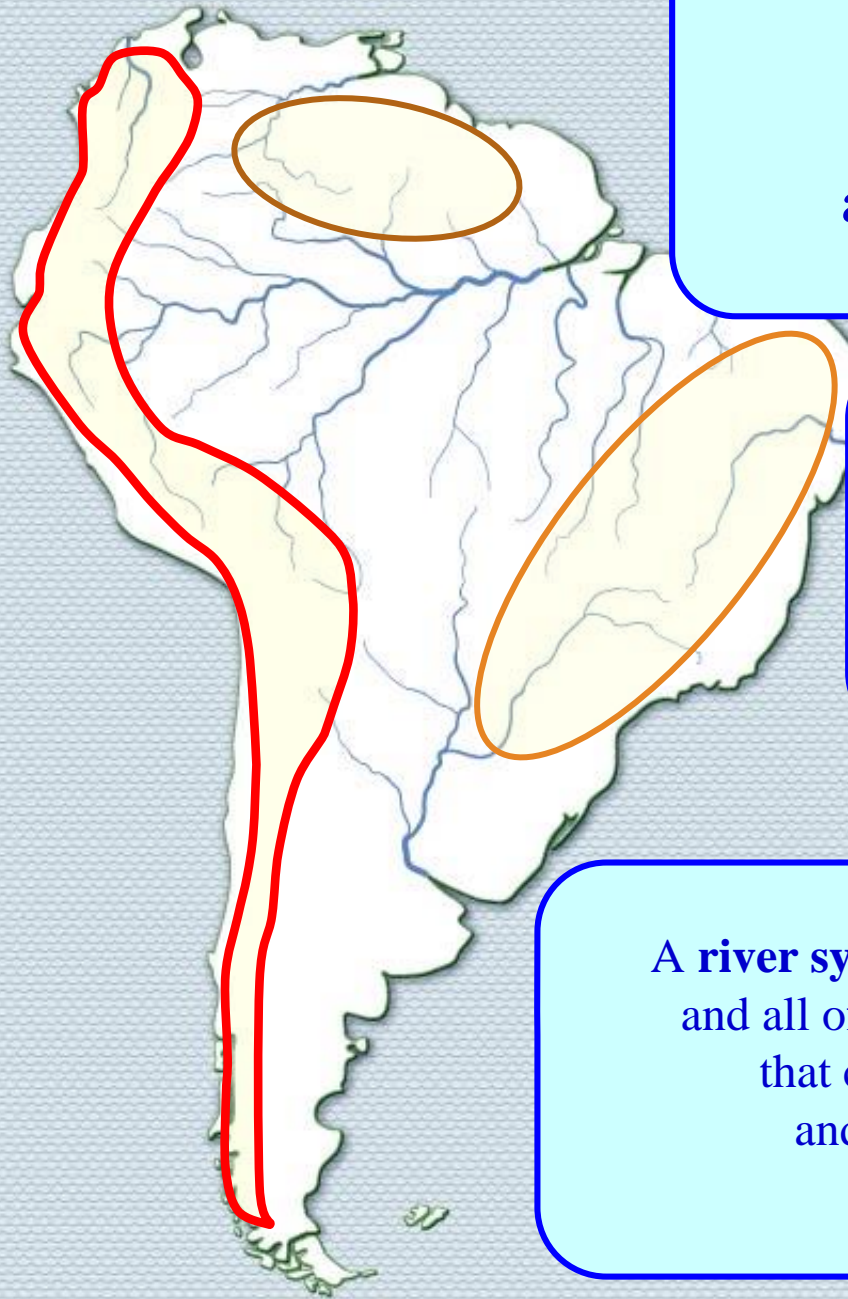
Andes  
Mountains

Brazil  
Highlands

That's it –  
three lines,  
and three  
highland regions.

Do you remember  
their names?

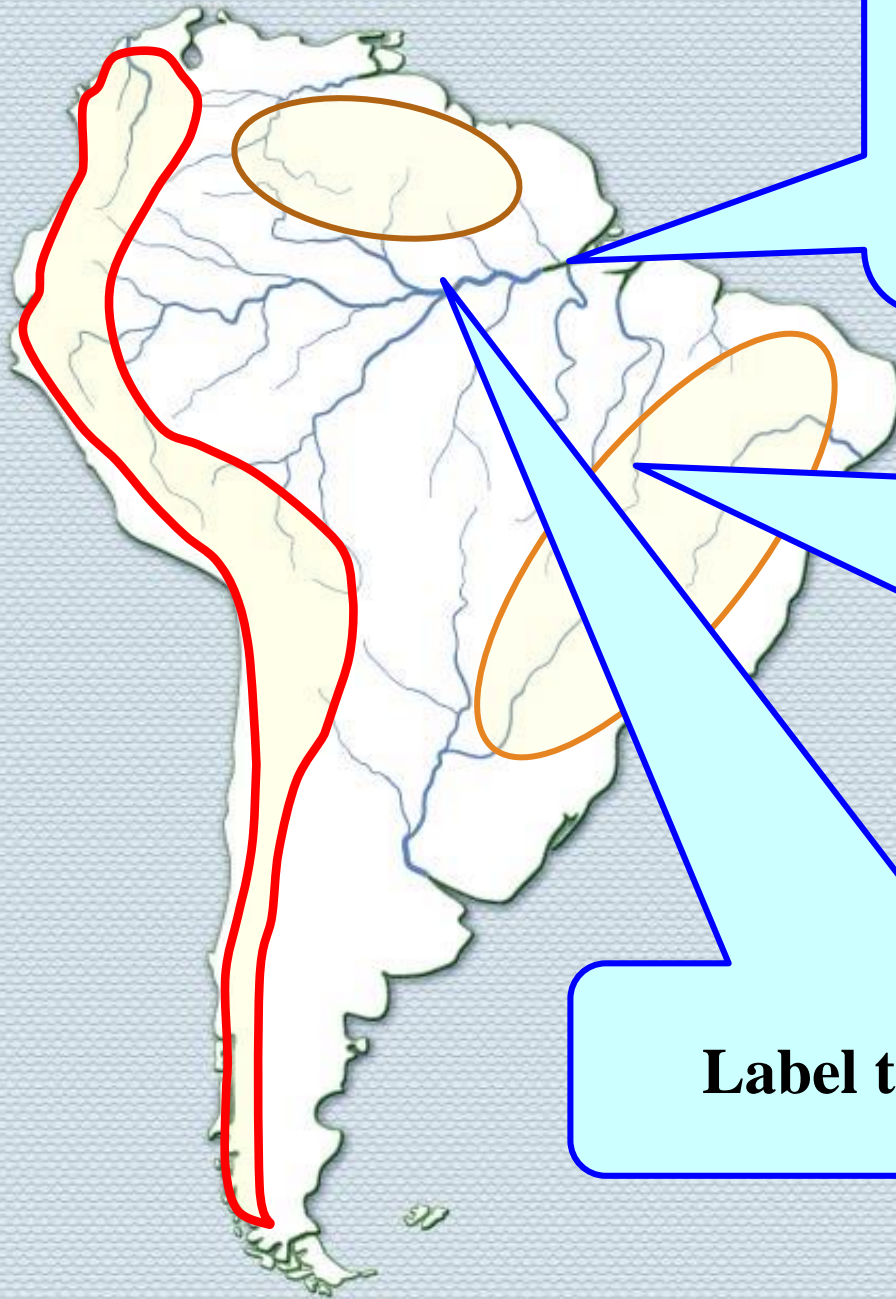




Three large river systems  
carry water  
away from these high areas.

**Write the names  
of 3 major rivers  
as we point them out!**

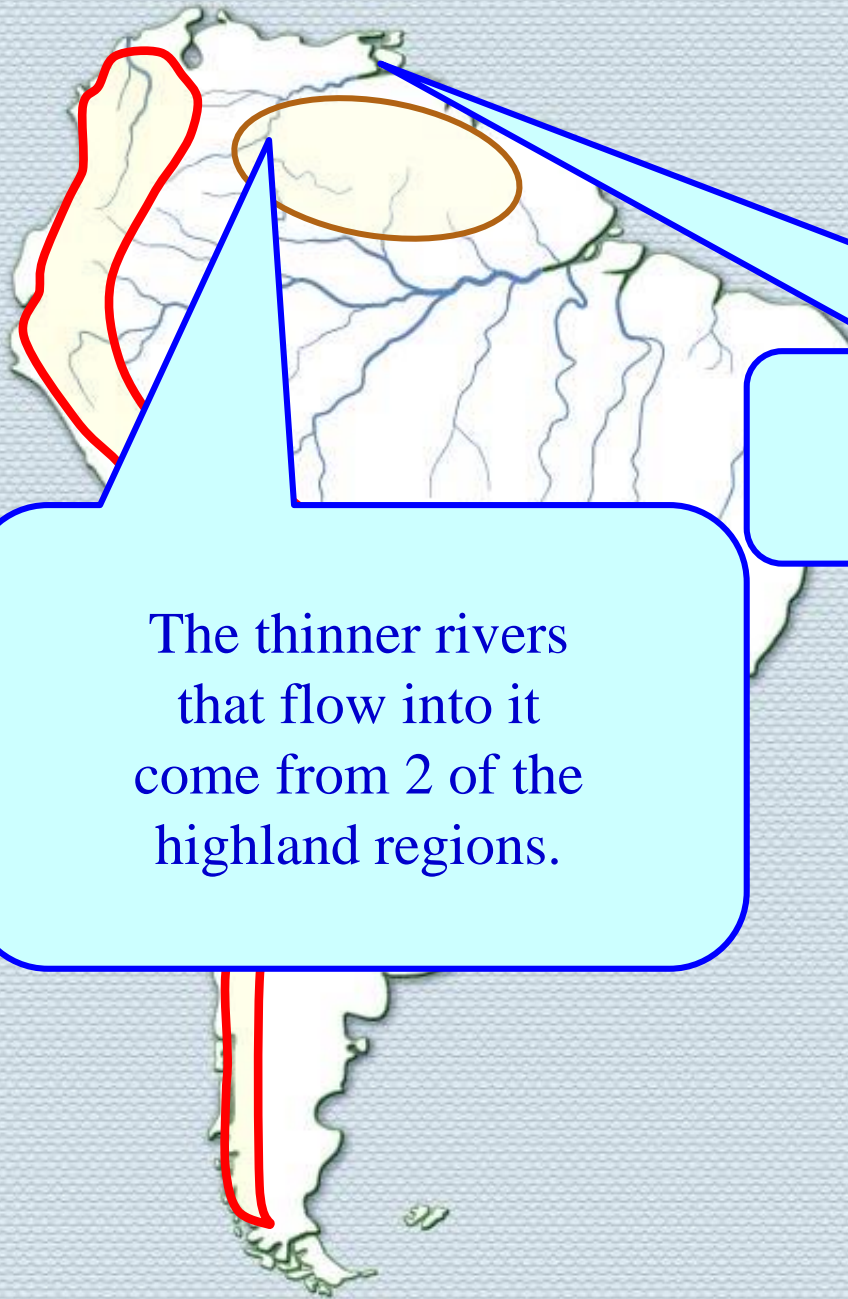
A **river system** is a large river  
and all of the smaller rivers  
that connect with it  
and carry water  
into it.



The **Amazon River** is by far the largest river in the world.

Notice that thinner rivers carry water from all 3 highland regions into the wider **Amazon River**.

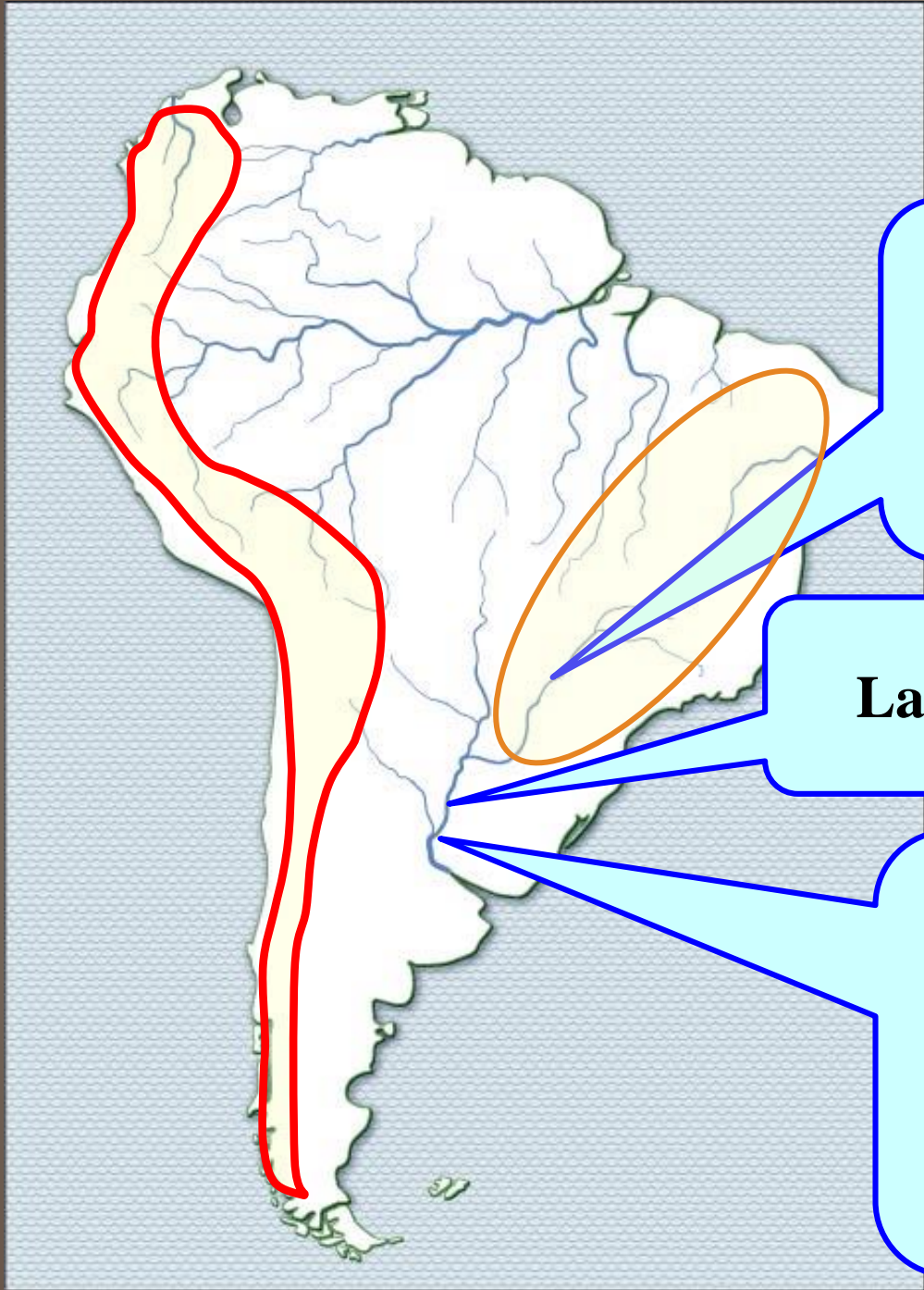
**Label the Amazon River.**



The **Orinoco River** is shorter, but it gets a lot of rain.

**Label the Orinoco River.**

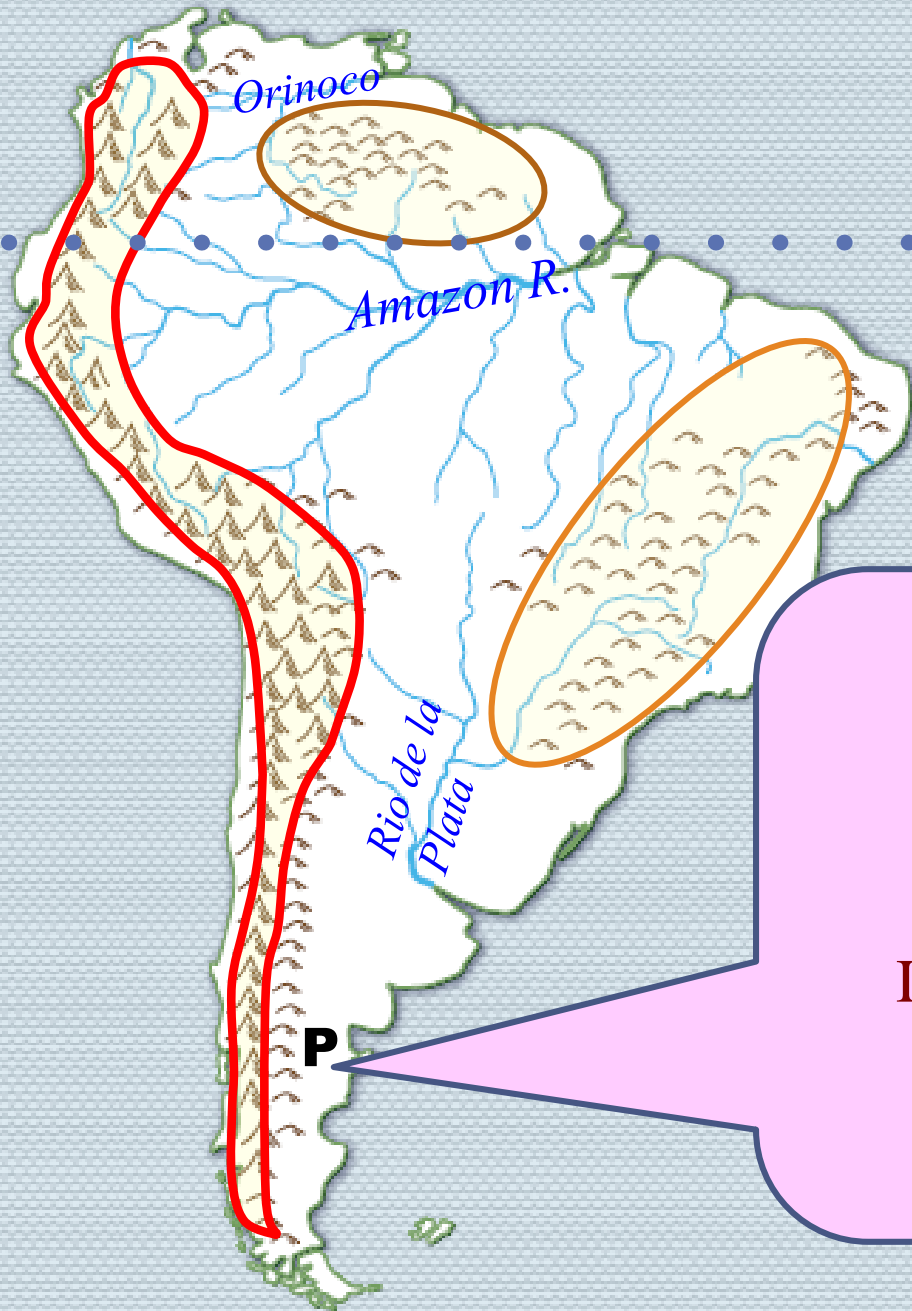
The thinner rivers that flow into it come from 2 of the highland regions.



The thinner rivers that flow into it come from 2 of the highland regions.


**Label the Rio de la Plata.**

This large river has three names – **Paraguay, Parana, and Rio de la Plata.**



The last region is an “empty” area called **Patagonia**.

It is a windy grassland with dry summers and cold winters.



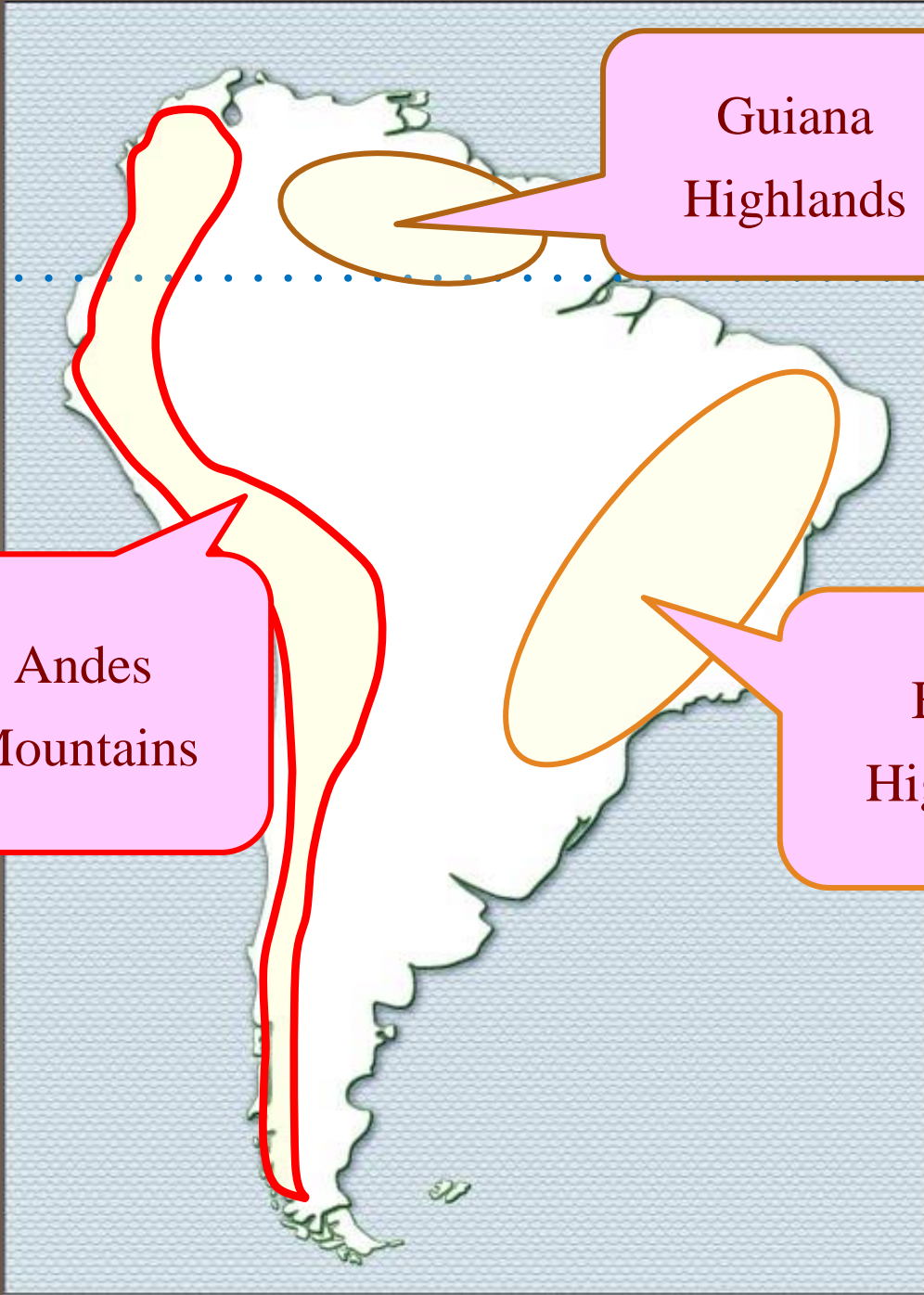
Can you remember  
the locations and names  
of

- three highlands,
- three river basins,
- a grassland

Can you remember  
the locations and names  
of

- three highlands,
- three river basins,
- a grassland





Guiana  
Highlands

Three  
**Highland**  
regions

Andes  
Mountains

Brazil  
Highlands





Orinoco  
River

Amazon  
River

Rio  
de la  
Plata

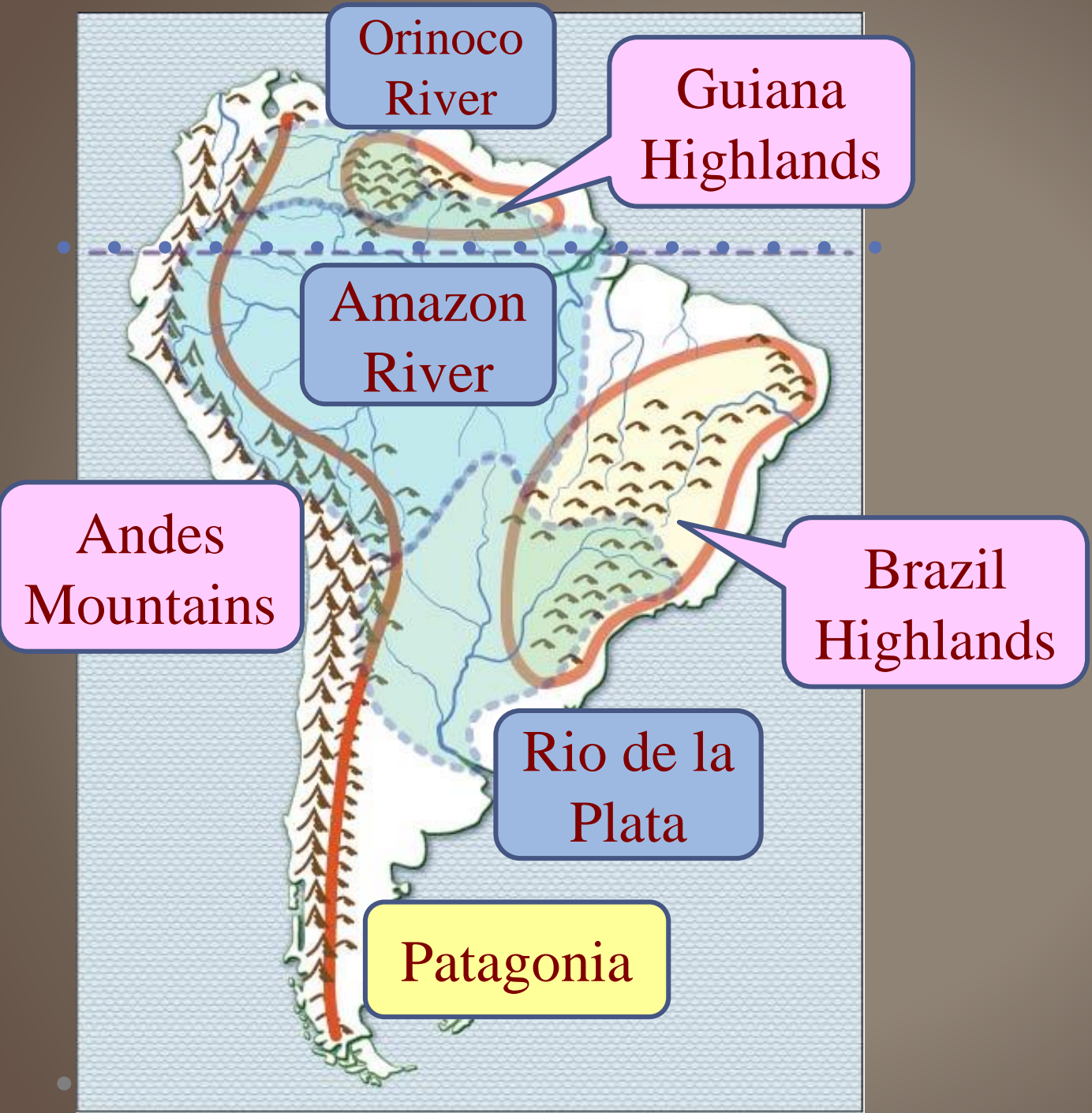
Three  
**River**  
systems

and  
**Patagonia**



If you can remember  
the general position  
of these three regions  
(plus the Equator),

you can divide  
South America  
into seven  
major regions.



Orinoco River

Guiana Highlands

Amazon River

Andes Mountains

Brazil Highlands

Rio de la Plata

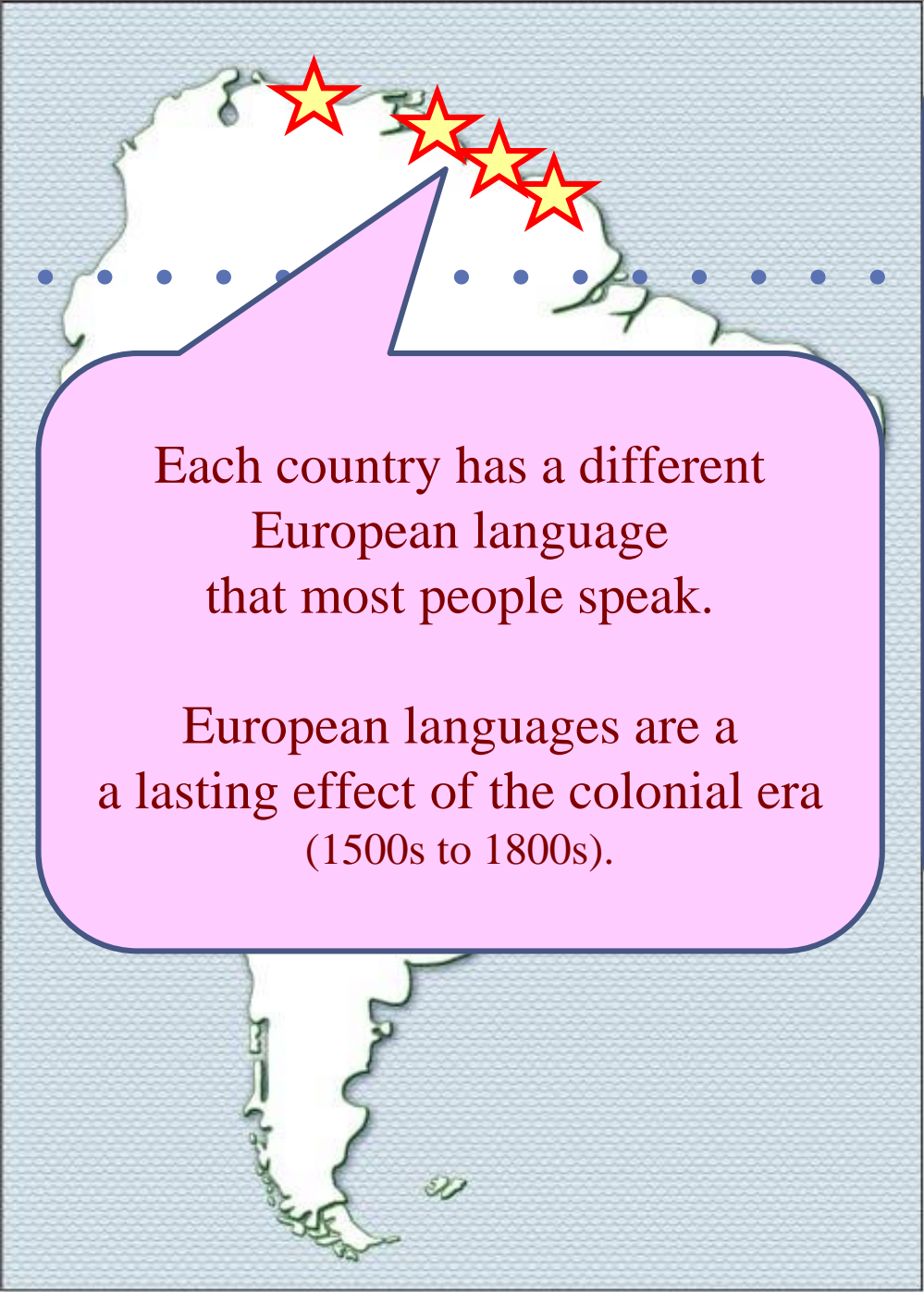
Patagonia



Here are four  
historic facts:



The Inka Empire ruled over most of the western **Andes Mountain** region in the early 1500s.

A map of South America is shown against a light blue background. The northern coast is highlighted with a white border. Four yellow stars with red outlines are placed along this coast, representing capital cities. A horizontal line of blue dots runs across the map, passing through the stars. A large pink speech bubble is positioned over the northern coast, and another pink speech bubble is on the right side of the map.

Most European colonial powers wanted a safe landing area on the north coast.

The stars represent capital cities of four small countries on the north side of the Guiana Highlands.

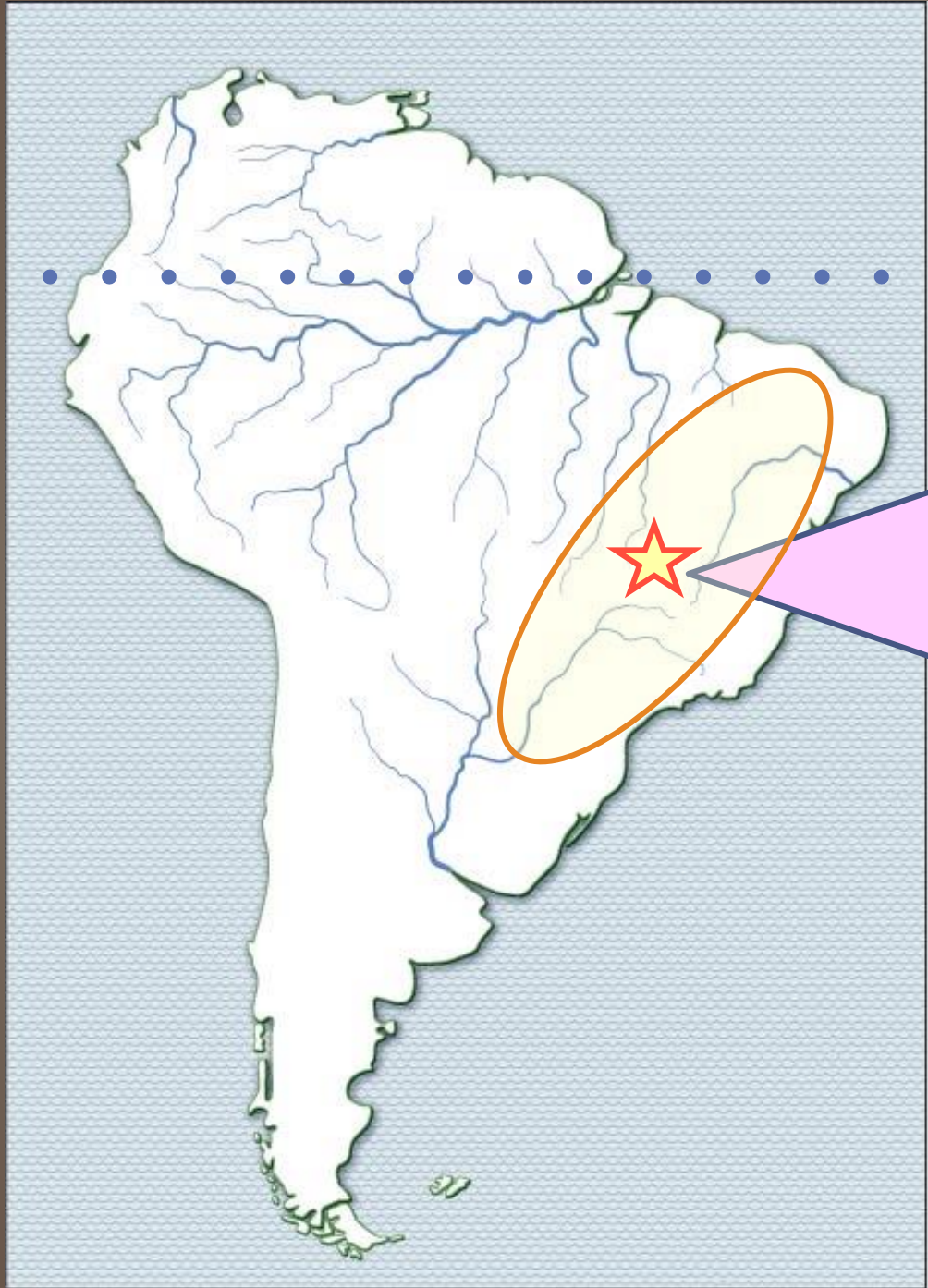
Each country has a different European language that most people speak.

European languages are a lasting effect of the colonial era (1500s to 1800s).



Three countries  
put their capitals  
next to this river.

It's called **Paraguay**  
(in Paraguay),  
**Parana**  
(in Argentina)  
and **Rio de la Plata**  
(between Argentina  
and Uruguay)



Finally, Brazil  
built its new capital  
– Brasilia –  
in the middle of  
the Brazil Highlands

(higher above sea level  
than 99% of the country!)



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